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SUBJECT: ISLAMIC AFFAIRS MINISTRY PLANS ISLAMIC MODERATION
CONFERENCE IN U.S. IN NOVEMBER 2006

REF: A) Kuwait 1741

B) Kuwait 882
C) Kuwait 806

11. Summary: (U) Building on the success of its International Moderation Conference held in London in May, the Kuwaiti Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs is proceeding to organize a similar conference in the U.S. in early November 2006. During a June 11 courtesy call by the Charge d'Affaires on the Ministry Undersecretary, it emerged that the conference would gather American Islamic leaders in order to encourage moderation and the peaceful co-existence of Muslims with other faiths. The Undersecretary emphasized that the worldwide adoption of these tenants is the vision of the Ministry and of the Kuwaiti Amir. He also related how pleased he was with the results of a 2006 International Visitor Leadership Program in which three Ministry officials traveled to the U.S. to learn about religious diversity in America. The Ministry would like to participate in more such programs, and expand cooperation at the local level. End summary.

12. (U) The Charge d'Affaires on June 11 called on Undersecretary of the Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs Dr. Adel Abdullah Al-Falah who emphasized the vision of the Ministry to organize conferences worldwide to promote Islamic moderation and the peaceful co-existence of Muslims with other faiths as a way of life. The plan is the offshoot of the success reported by the Undersecretary of a similar conference that the Ministry organized in London from May 26-28, 2006. Dr. Al-Falah revealed tentative plans to hold the next moderation conference in the United States from November 4-5, 2006. A location has not been finalized. The U.S. conference would be the next step in the Ministry's ambitious proposal to conduct future similar seminars around the world, including in Russia and China.

13. (SBU) The proposed U.S. conference is being coordinated by the Ministry and the Kuwait Embassy in Washington. The Charge suggested that planning include an opportunity for participants to visit Washington in order to meet with USG officials and with members of Congress. Dr. Al-Falah said the Kuwait Ambassador to the U.S. suggests that the first such conference be held in a location other than Washington D.C. and then once the first conference established a ground work of understanding, then leaders could travel to the capital for relevant meetings and consultations.

14. (U) The Ministry's eagerness to follow through with more such programs is based on the success of the May conference in London. Dr. Al-Falah spoke of how it brought together top leadership of European Islamic communities, including clerics. The emphasis was on ways that U.K. Muslims could be both loyal British citizens and good Muslims. Emphasis was on encouraging "full and effective

citizenship" while being Muslim at the same time. The Minister described the ultimate aim as "promoting peaceful co-existence" and "shunning extremism." Mutalq Al-Qarawi, Assistant Undersecretary of the Holy Quran, Islamic Studies and the Hajj, who also participated in the meeting, commented that the London conference was the Ministry's first experience outside Kuwait. He emphasized how well the conference went and he supported the Undersecretary's desire to expand the program and to "make this experiment more successful."

15. (U) Dr. Al-Falah commented positively on the recent International Visitor Leadership Program in which three Ministry officials traveled to the U.S. to learn of religious diversity in America. He said that these types of visits have a "great influence" and are beneficial to both the American and Kuwaiti peoples. The Charge recommended that the Ministry work with the Public Affairs Section to send as many as six other Ministry officials on similar programs this year. The Undersecretary responded positively to the recommendation and even suggested sending a higher number of participants.

16. (U) Also discussed was an offer by the Charge to expand understanding locally by arranging contacts with Kuwaiti Imams and U.S. military chaplains at Camp Arifjan. Dr. Al-Falah said that he would be happy to arrange such dialogues. On this topic, he also noted that the Ministry maintains the Kuwaiti Center for Cultural Exchange at the Grand Mosque in Kuwait City. This institution is a teaching center for Westerners in Kuwait who wish to learn about Islam. Dr. Al-Falah pointed out that in the past the center coordinated special Arabic-language classes for U.S. military personnel in Kuwait. He expressed a desire to further expand this type of cooperation.

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